

CLAIMS

1. In a system comprising an information system and a graphical user interface associated with the information system, a method for selectively displaying at least one announcement upon the graphical user interface to a group of recipients selected from a plurality of recipients, the method comprising:

 a step for creating an electronic announcement comprising a termination attribute, a message attribute, and a target criteria attribute;

 a step for identifying a group of recipients from the plurality of recipients to receive the electronic announcement by comparing the target criteria attribute against one or more attributes associated with each of the plurality of recipients, the group of recipients comprising at least one recipient of the plurality of recipients having at least one of the one or more attributes matching the target criteria attribute;

 a step for persistently displaying the electronic announcement to the at least one recipient accessing the information system subsequent to delivery of the electronic announcement; and

 a step for terminating the persistent display of the electronic announcement based upon the termination attribute defined by an author of the announcement.

2. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the target criteria attribute comprises a plurality of attributes connected together using one or more operators.

3. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the target criteria attribute comprises at least one of a recipient's gender, grade point average, full time or part-time status, continuing education enrollment, teaching assistant position, courses currently attending, role, group or organization membership, courses taught, academic major, academic minor, date of birth, year in school, school address, home address, or date of last login.

4. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the target criteria attribute comprises at least one of a recipient's electronic mail address, first name, or last name.

5. The method as recited in claim 4, wherein the step for creating comprises presenting an individual with at least one directory of selectable criteria associated with the plurality of recipients.

6. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step for creating comprises defining a plurality of criteria and a plurality of operators combining the plurality of criteria.

7. The method as recited in claim 6, wherein each of the plurality of operators is a Boolean operator.

8. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step for identifying further comprises searching a message module for the least one attribute associated with the group of recipients, the message module accessing at least one database configured to store the at least one attribute.

9. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising a step for identifying at least one priority attribute for the electronic announcement, the at least one priority attribute defining the manner by which the electronic announcement is displayed to the group of recipients.

10. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising a step for selecting a pre-composed electronic announcement stored in the information system.

11. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising a step for receiving a pre-composed electronic announcement from an external system.

12. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising a step for identifying a delivery attribute for the electronic announcement, the delivery attribute defining one or more methods for delivering the electronic announcement to the group of recipients.

13. The method as recited in claim 12, wherein the electronic announcement is delivered by electronic mail.

14. The method as recited in claim 12, wherein the graphical user interface is customized for the group of recipients.

15. The method as recited in claim 12, wherein the electronic announcement is delivered as an instant message to the graphical user interface.

16. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the termination attribute defines a period of time between the time when the electronic announcement is displayed to the group of recipients and when the electronic announcement is automatically terminated from persistent display.

17. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the termination attribute includes at least one rule that defines when to terminate persistently displaying the electronic announcement.

18. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the termination attribute is modifiable by receipt of an electronic communication indicating the electronic announcement should be terminated.

19. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising a step for transmitting to the individual a notifying message after a recipient of the group of recipients has read the notifying message, the notifying message indicating that the recipient accessed the message.

20. The method as recited in claim 19, wherein the notifying message indicates the number of times the recipient accessed the message.

21. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising a step for archiving delivered electronic announcements.

22. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the information system is a university system.

23. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the duration of time that the electronic announcement is persistently displayed to the group of recipients is controlled by the author of the announcement.

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24. In a system comprising at least one server, a method for transmitting an electronic announcement to at least one recipient selected based upon a target criteria attribute defined by the creator of the electronic announcement, the method comprising the acts of:

requesting a graphical user interface configured to facilitate entry of electronic announcement data, the graphical user interface comprising at least fields for defining at least one of a termination attribute, a target criteria attribute, and a message attribute;

defining at least one recipient of a plurality of recipients to receive the electronic announcement data based upon the announcement target criteria attribute and at least one attributed associated with the at least one recipient;

at the at least one server, generating and storing an electronic announcement, derived from the electronic announcement data, for access by the at least one recipient upon the at least one recipient accessing the information system; and

upon the at least one recipient accessing the information system, persistently displaying the electronic announcement to the at least one recipient upon a graphical user interface customized for the at least one recipient, display of the electronic announcement being terminated based upon a termination attribute.

25. The method as recited in claim 24, wherein the graphical user interface further comprises a delivery information field by which a delivery attribute is defined.

26. The method as recited in claim 24, wherein the graphical user interface further comprises a priority selection field by which a priority attribute is defined.

27. The method as recited in claim 24, wherein the graphical user interface further comprises a subject field by which a subject attribute is defined.

28. In a computer system having at least one graphical user interface, a method for creating an electronic announcement displayable upon a customizable web page of at least one selected recipients of a plurality of recipients based upon one or more recipient attributes, the method comprising the acts of:

displaying a graphical user interface comprising a plurality of fields upon a first display, the plurality of fields capable of being filled with announcement data associated with an electronic announcement, the plurality of fields comprising at least one of:

a text field containing the text of the electronic announcement;

a subject field containing a description of the subject of the electronic announcement;

a priority field representative of a priority level of the electronic announcement; and

a termination event field which defines the one or more events that removes the electronic announcement from display to the one or more recipients;

upon receiving the announcement data through the graphical user interface, generating the electronic announcement from the announcement data; and

displaying the electronic announcement upon the personalized web page until the occurrence of the termination event defined in the termination event field.

29. The method as recited in claim 28, wherein the plurality of fields further comprises a method of delivery field.

30. A computer product for implementing in a networked computer, a method for enabling an individual to transmit messages to selected recipients based upon a target criteria attribute, the computer program product comprising:

 a computer-readable medium carrying computer-executable instructions that, when executed at the computer, cause the computer to perform the method, the method including the acts of:

 upon receiving a request from an individual to transmit a message, retrieving for and transmitting to the individual a user interface, the user interface comprising a plurality of selectable attributes associated with a plurality of recipients, at least one termination attribute defining a termination event, and a plurality of fields capable of being filled with message data;

 upon the individual selecting one or more of the plurality of selectable attributes and filling one or more of the plurality of fields, creating an electronic announcement based upon the plurality of selectable attributes and the message data;

 identifying at least one recipient of the plurality of recipients that has at least one attribute the same as at least one of the plurality of selectable attributes selected by the individual; and

 persistently displaying the electronic announcement to the at least one of the plurality of recipients until the occurrence of the termination event defined by the individual.

31. A computer product for implementing, in a networked computer, a method for creating an announcement directed to recipients based upon one or more attributes associated with the recipients, the computer program product comprising:

 a computer-readable medium carrying computer-executable instructions that, when executed at the client computer, cause the client computer to perform the method, including the acts of:

 transmitting to the server a request for a graphical user interface, the graphical user interface comprising a template for creating an electronic announcement, the template containing at least one of:

 an attribute selection field;

 a delivery information field;

 a subject field; and

 a message entry field;

 receiving, from the server, the requested template; and

 transmitting to the server the completed template, the template thereafter used by the server to generate an electronic announcement which is transmitted to one or more recipients having the selected attributes.